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EXAMINER

BRUCKART, BENJAMIN R

ART UNIT	PAPER NUMBER
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2155

DATE MAILED: 08/03/2005

Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.

Office Action Summary

Application No.

09/675,883

Applicant(s)

TAKISHITA, NOBUAKI

Examiner

Benjamin R. Bruckart

Art Unit

2155

-- The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address --

Period for Reply

A SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD FOR REPLY IS SET TO EXPIRE 3 MONTH(S) FROM THE MAILING DATE OF THIS COMMUNICATION.

- Extensions of time may be available under the provisions of 37 CFR 1.136(a). In no event, however, may a reply be timely filed after SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- If the period for reply specified above is less than thirty (30) days, a reply within the statutory minimum of thirty (30) days will be considered timely.
- If NO period for reply is specified above, the maximum statutory period will apply and will expire SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- Failure to reply within the set or extended period for reply will, by statute, cause the application to become ABANDONED (35 U.S.C. § 133). Any reply received by the Office later than three months after the mailing date of this communication, even if timely filed, may reduce any earned patent term adjustment. See 37 CFR 1.704(b).

Status

- 1) ☒ Responsive to communication(s) filed on 22 February 2005.
- 2a) ☐ This action is **FINAL**. 2b) ☒ This action is non-final.
- 3) ☐ Since this application is in condition for allowance except for formal matters, prosecution as to the merits is closed in accordance with the practice under *Ex parte Quayle*, 1935 C.D. 11, 453 O.G. 213.

Disposition of Claims

- 4) ☒ Claim(s) 1,3-6 and 8-17 is/are pending in the application.
- 4a) Of the above claim(s) _____ is/are withdrawn from consideration.
- 5) ☐ Claim(s) _____ is/are allowed.
- 6) ☒ Claim(s) 1, 3-6, 8-17 is/are rejected.
- 7) ☐ Claim(s) _____ is/are objected to.
- 8) ☐ Claim(s) _____ are subject to restriction and/or election requirement.

Application Papers

- 9) ☐ The specification is objected to by the Examiner.
- 10) ☐ The drawing(s) filed on _____ is/are: a) ☐ accepted or b) ☐ objected to by the Examiner.
Applicant may not request that any objection to the drawing(s) be held in abeyance. See 37 CFR 1.85(a).
Replacement drawing sheet(s) including the correction is required if the drawing(s) is objected to. See 37 CFR 1.121(d).
- 11) ☐ The oath or declaration is objected to by the Examiner. Note the attached Office Action or form PTO-152.

Priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119

- 12) ☒ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).
- a) ☒ All b) ☐ Some * c) ☐ None of:
1. ☒ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.
2. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. _____.
3. ☐ Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this National Stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).
- * See the attached detailed Office action for a list of the certified copies not received.

Attachment(s)

- 1) ☒ Notice of References Cited (PTO-892)
- 2) ☐ Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948)
- 3) ☐ Information Disclosure Statement(s) (PTO-1449 or PTO/SB/08)
Paper No(s)/Mail Date _____.
- 4) ☐ Interview Summary (PTO-413)
Paper No(s)/Mail Date. _____.
- 5) ☐ Notice of Informal Patent Application (PTO-152)
- 6) ☐ Other: _____.

Detailed Action

Status of Claims:

Claims 1, 3-6, 8-17 are pending in this Office Action.

Claims 2 and 7 are canceled.

Response to Arguments

In view of further search and consideration, PROSECUTION IS HEREBY REOPENED.

New grounds of rejection set forth below.

Applicant's invention as claimed:

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 102

The following is a quotation of the appropriate paragraphs of 35 U.S.C. 102 that form the basis for the rejections under this section made in this Office action:

A person shall be entitled to a patent unless –

(b) the invention was patented or described in a printed publication in this or a foreign country or in public use or on sale in this country, more than one year prior to the date of application for patent in the United States.

Claims 1, 3, 5, 11, 6, 13, 15, 16, and 10 are rejected under 102(b) as being anticipated by U.S. Patent No. 4,974,173 by Stefik et al.

Regarding claim 1,

a method of indicating user access status for each of a plurality of users of collaborative groupware software (Stefik: col. 4, lines 43-50), said user access status indicating whether each particular user has accessed at least one document of said groupware (Stefik: col. 4, lines 56-68), said method comprising the steps of:

(a) displaying a status row bar in a view window of each user (Stefik: col. 4, lines 43-55);
and

(b) automatically providing a user access status indicating the user access status for every user of each document of said groupware in said displayed status row bar (Stefik: col. 4, lines 35-68), said user access status indication being viewable by all of said plurality of users of the groupware (Stefik: col. 4, lines 43-68).

Regarding claim 3, the method according to claim 1, wherein when the users are divided into groups (Stefik: col. 4, lines 28-37), and wherein said user access status indication further shows what percentage of the users of each group have read each document for each group (Stefik: col. 7, line 65- col. 8, line 20).

Regarding claim 5, the method according to claim 1, wherein said status indication is provided by colors or patterns (Stefik: col. 7, lines 37-43).

Regarding claim 11, the method according to claim 1, wherein said user status indicates whether a user has changed a document (Stefik: col. 4, lines 56-65).

Regarding claim 6, an apparatus for carrying out a method of indicating a user access status regarding access to at least one document of collaborative groupware software for each of a plurality of users of groupware (Stefik: col. 4, lines 43-50), said user access status indicating

whether each user has accessed status indicating whether each user has accessed at least one document of said groupware (Stefik: col. 4, lines 56-68), said apparatus comprising:

a server connected to a network comprising a status determining component for automatically determining and updating user access status for every user of said plurality of users and a status database for storing a plurality of user access status indications (Stefik: col. 4, lines 35-68; col. 1, lines 51-61); and

at least one display device for displaying said user access status indications viewable by all of said plurality of users of groupware (Stefik: col. 4, lines 43-55).

Regarding claim 13, the apparatus according to claim 6, wherein when the users are divided into groups (Stefik: col. 4, lines 28-37), said user access status indication further shows what percentage of the users of each group have read each document for each group (Stefik: col. 7, line 65- col. 8, line 20).

Regarding claim 15, the apparatus of claim 6 further comprising a manager operation section connected to said network and comprising a manager input device and a manager screen (Stefik: col. 5, lines 54-60).

Regarding claim 16, the apparatus according to claim 6 further comprising a user operation section connected said network and including at least one user screen and at least one user input device (Stefik: col. 5, lines 54-60).

Regarding claim 10, a program storage device readable by machine, tangibly embodying a program of instructions executable by the machine to perform method steps for indicating user access status for each of a plurality of users of collaborative groupware software (Stefik: col. 4, lines 43-50), said user access status indicating whether each particular user has accessed at least one document of said groupware (Stefik: col. 4, lines 56-68), said method comprising the steps of:

(a) displaying a status row bar in a view window of each user (Stefik: col. 4, lines 43-55);
and

(b) automatically providing a user access status indication indicating the user access status for every user of each document of said groupware in said displayed status row bar (Stefik: col. 4, lines 35-68), said user access status indication being viewable by all of said plurality of users of the groupware (Stefik: col. 4, lines 43-68).

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 103

The following is a quotation of 35 U.S.C. 103(a) which forms the basis for all obviousness rejections set forth in this Office action:

(a) A patent may not be obtained though the invention is not identically disclosed or described as set forth in section 102 of this title, if the differences between the subject matter sought to be patented and the prior art are such that the subject matter as a whole would have been obvious at the time the invention was made to a person having ordinary skill in the art to which said subject matter pertains. Patentability shall not be negated by the manner in which the invention was made.

Claims 4 and 14 are rejected under 103(a) as being unpatentable by U.S. Patent No. 4,974,173 by Stefik et al in view of U. S. Patent No. 5,504,889 by Burgess.

Regarding claim 4, the Stefik reference teaches the method according to claim 1.

The Stefik reference does not explicitly state documents into groups.

The Burgess reference teaches documents are divided into document groups, each of which consists of a plurality of documents (Burgess: col. 1, lines 26-35; category including one or more files), said method further comprising displaying a document group status indication showing whether at least one of the documents in each document group has not been read for each document group (Burgess: col. 2, lines 12-20).

The Burgess reference further teaches the invention keeps track of which files remain unread by a user (Burgess: col. 1, lines 14-21).

Therefore it would have been obvious at the time of the invention to one of ordinary skill in the art to create the system of indicating user status in groupware as taught by Stefik while grouping documents and checking which documents in the group are unread as taught by Burgess in order to keep track of which files a user has not read (Burgess: col. 1, lines 14-21).

Claim 14 is rejected under the same rationale given above. In the rejections set fourth, the examiner will address the additional limitations and point to the relevant teachings of Burgess et al and Stefik et al.

Regarding claim 14, the apparatus of claim 6, where when the documents are divided into document groups, each of which consists of a plurality of documents (Burgess: col. 1, lines 26-35; category including one or more files), said method further comprising displaying a document group status indication showing whether at least one of the documents in each document group has not been read for each document group (Burgess: col. 2, lines 12-20).

Claims 8 and 12 are rejected under 103(a) as being unpatentable by U.S. Patent No. 4,974,173 by Stefik et al in view of U.S. Patent No. 6,230,185 by Salas et al.

Regarding claim 12, the Stefik reference teaches the method according to claim 11.

The Stefik reference does not explicitly state marking a document as “not read.”

The Salas reference teaches when a user changes a document, the user access status indication is automatically updated to “not read.” (Salas: col. 5, lines 43-49).

The Salas reference further teaches the system allows users to perform work on files and objects locally and upload them to the server for viewing, comment, or further modification by other project team members (Salas: col. 12, lines 31-37).

Therefore it would have been obvious at the time of the invention to one of ordinary skill in the art to create the system of indicating user status in groupware as taught by Stefik while indicating whether a user has changed a document as taught by Salas in order to allow other project team members to view, comment, or further modify the file (Salas: col. 12, lines 31-37).

Regarding claim 8,

The Stefik reference teaches the apparatus according to claim 6, wherein said server further comprises a status update component, wherein when a user changes a document to provide an updated document (Stefik: col. 4, lines 56-65).

The Stefik reference teaches indicating to other user when a change occurs but not setting the document to unread.

The Salas reference teaches statuses of the other of said plurality of users are automatically set to “not read” in said status database for said document (Salas: col. 5, lines 43-49).

The Salas reference further teaches the system allows users to perform work on files and objects locally and upload them to the server for viewing, comment, or further modification by other project team members (Salas: col. 12, lines 31-37).

Therefore it would have been obvious at the time of the invention to one of ordinary skill in the art to create the system of indicating user status in groupware as taught by Stefik while indicating whether a user has changed a document as taught by Salas in order to allow other project team members to view, comment, or further modify the file (Salas: col. 12, lines 31-37).

Claim 9 is rejected under 103(a) as being unpatentable by U.S. Patent No. 4,974,173 by Stefik et al in view of U.S. Patent No. 6,230,185 by Salas et al in further view of U.S Patent No. 5,842,195 by Peters et al.

Regarding claim 9,

The Stefik and Salas references teach the apparatus according to claim 8.

The Stefik and Salas references do not explicitly state mail generation.

The Peters reference teaches mail generation component from which a mail is sent to members of a specific group who have not read the document (Peters: col. 21, lines 21-36; mail sent to remind of the survey).

The Peters reference further teaches the system tracks users responses and can be used to send reminders to those who have not responded to prompt action from a few more users (Peters: col. 21, lines 21-45).

Therefore it would have been obvious at the time of the invention to one of ordinary skill in the art to create the system of indicating user status in groupware as taught by Stefik and Salas while utilizing mail generation as taught by Peters in order to track users responses and send

reminders to those who have not responded to prompt action from a few more users (Peters: col. 21, lines 21-45).

Claim 17 is rejected under 103(a) as being unpatentable by U.S. Patent No. 4,974,173 by Stefik et al in view of U.S Patent No. 5,842,195 by Peters et al.

Regarding claim 17,

The Stefik reference teaches the apparatus according to claim 6.

The Stefik reference does not explicitly state mail generation.

The Peters reference teaches mail generation component from which a mail is sent to members of a specific group who have not read the document (Peters: col. 21, lines 21-36; mail sent to remind of the survey).

The Peters reference further teaches the system tracks users responses and can be used to send reminders to those who have not responded to prompt action from a few more users (Peters: col. 21, lines 21-45).

Therefore it would have been obvious at the time of the invention to one of ordinary skill in the art to create the system of indicating user status in groupware as taught by Stefik while utilizing mail generation as taught by Peters in order to track users responses and send reminders to those who have not responded to prompt action from a few more users (Peters: col. 21, lines 21-45).

Conclusion

Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to Benjamin R Bruckart whose telephone number 571-272-3982.

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If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, Saleh Najjar can be reached on (571) 272-4006. The fax phone numbers for the organization where this application or proceeding is assigned are (571) 273-8300 for regular communications and after final communications.

Any inquiry of a general nature or relating to the status of this application or proceeding should be directed to the examiner whose telephone number is 571-272-3982.

Benjamin R Bruckart
Examiner
Art Unit 2155

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SALEH NAJJAR
PRIMARY EXAMINER